

Montana Public Service Commission
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PSC TO PROCEED WITH CONSIDERATION
OF EXPANDED LOCAL CALLING FOR WEST GLACIER

The Public Service Commission has asked US West Communications and PTI Communications to determine what the costs would be to include the West Glacier telephone exchange in PTI's's

Flathead Valley calling area and to propose rates to cover those costs.

Calls between West Glacier and PTI's service territory in the Flathead Valley are currently long-distance calls. If the PSC approves extended area service (EAS) for West Glacier into the Flathead Valley, calling between the two areas will be local instead of long-distance.

In August, 85 West Glacier residents attended a Public Service Commission hearing on EAS

rules. According to Commissioner Bob Rowe, "West Glacier residents demonstrated overwhelming

support to be connected to the rest of Flathead County. Often, it's now a long distance call from home

to work, or to the children's school. Based on that interest, when we put the rules in place, West

Glacier was one of the first areas the Commission began looking at."

As a first step, US West and PTI submitted call usage studies to the PSC that demonstrate that

the West Glacier exchange, which is served by US West, qualifies to be considered for inclusion in the

Flathead calling region. The two phone companies have 90 days to prepare the cost analysis and

proposed rate design. When that information is submitted, the PSC will schedule one or more public

hearings to provide affected customers the opportunity to comment on the proposal, which is likely to

contain an increase in monthly phone rates. The PSC may also direct PTI and US West to send affected

customers ballots to determine acceptance of EAS.

Rowe stated, "EAS is not the solution for every area. What we're doing now is gathering the

information which will allow citizens to make a decision about the best approach for their community."

Persons who want to comment at this stage of the proceeding rather than waiting until the cost

information is available may send written comments by January 25 to: PSC, PO Box 202601, Helena

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